

UCSC 25th Anniversary Lecture Series

Playing textual analysis as music

The use of software tools to analyse large texts or collections of texts is commonly employed as a means of highlighting characteristics in the texts. High speed processing and the automated nature of such approaches mean that they often light on details that may be missed through manual analysis or casual observation. Highlighting differences or similarities between texts has application in genre analysis, authorship studies and document forensics, in addition to other mainstream research domains such as historical linguistics, and literary studies. Although the accessibility of textual analysis tools is on the rise, there are often difficulties in securing clear analytical results and many tools provide low-level statistical analyses, with extensive data output, but leave the task of interpreting the results up to the investigator. In this setting, we have begun investigating a novel approach to data projection that may assist in a variety of contexts.

What if we could compare documents by their sound? Is it possible to categorize and distinguish documents, for example, by genre or by author, by the way they sound? Can we find a way to map characteristics of the text to characteristics of music such that the mapping will not only be meaningful (revealing) but will also produce sounds that are recognizably musical (and pleasant)? To explore these questions, we have developed a prototype software tool that takes the data output from an existing textual analysis program and maps the results to a musical 'interpretation'. This allows listeners to hear the textual characteristics of a particular document or to compare the textual characteristics across several documents according to the musical projection of the data analyses. In this talk, we will illustrate the musical representation of example texts and consider this perspective on textual interpretation.

Date

8th July 2010

Time

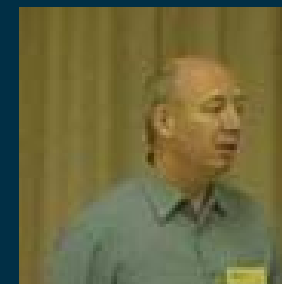
5.15 p.m.

Venue

Prof.V.K. Samaranayake Auditorium
University of Colombo School of Computing
35, Reid Avenue, Colombo.

About the Speaker

Dr George Weir



George Weir's academic background lies in philosophy and he has a persistent interest in language and conceptual analysis that tends to infuse much of his computing-related research. He has a Scottish education and a Scottish accent. His research areas cover computer security, digital forensics and cybercrime, human language technologies, computational linguistics, human-computer interaction, e-learning. He has published extensively across these subject areas.

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